

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14234

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR OAU ET

SUBJ: REACTION OF OAU STATES TO ETHIOPIAN EXECUTIONS

REF: STATE 261727

1. REACTION AMONG LOCAL AFRICAN DIPLOMATS AND OAU OFFICIALS TO NOV. 23 EXECUTIONS VARIES FROM REVULSION AND DISGUST (NIGERIANS, TANZANIANS) TO REGRET BUT CAUTIOUS HOPE "DIRG" WILL NOW BE ABLE TO MAKE COMPROMISES NECESSARY TO UNIFY COUNTRY. SUDAN TYPIFIES LATTER VIEW (CF ADDIS 14208).

2. MOST OF THE STRONG NEGATIVE AFRICAN REACTIONS HAVE EFFERVENSCED PRIVATELY OUT OF DESIRE NOT TO EMBARRASS FELLOW AFRICAN COUNTRY AND FEAR THAT CONDEMNATION MIGHT PROVOKE FURTHER EXECUTIONS. MAJORITY OF AFRICAN DIPLOMATS HAD BEEN SYMPATHETIC TO EPMG'S REVOLUTION BEFORE NOV. 23. THIS HAS CHANGED. ALTHOUGH SITUATION IS UNCLEAR, MOST INTERLOCUTORS PREDICT FUTURE POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION. AFTER EXECUTIONS, "DIRG" HAS FEW IF ANY FRIENDS LEFT
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AMONG AFRICAN DIPLOMATS. LATTER FULLY AWARE OF EMPEROR'S WORLD-

WIDE PRESTIGE AND FEAR HIS ELIMINATION WOULD TARNISH NOT ONLY ETHIOPIA'S IMAGE BUT ALL AFRICA'S AS WELL.

3. UGANDA'S GENERAL AMIN SENT EPMG TYPICALLY BOMBASTIC MESSAGE (APPARENTLY COMMERCIALS SINCE UGANDAN CHARGE HERE DENIES KNOWLEDGE OF IT) STRONGLY CRITICAL OF EXECUTIONS. AMIN'S MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC BUT EPMG'S CAUSTIC GLOVES OFF REPLY APPEARED IN NOV. 29 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ETHIOPIAN HERALD (BEING POUCHED). FROM TEXT AMIN APPARENTLY CALLED FOR REMOVAL OF OAU SECRETARIAT FROM ADDIS, LIKENED EPMG'S ACTIVITY IN ERITREA TO THAT OF COLONIAL PORTUGUESE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, ETC. IN STATING LIFE "IS SECURE AND NORMAL IN ETHIOPIA," EPMG'S REPLY TO AMIN NOTED THAT "PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T THROW STONES." EPMG ALSO STATED CONVICTION THAT RECENT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES HERE COMBINED WITH FACT OAU HEADQUARTERS LOCATED IN ADDIS WOULD PUT OAU "IN STRONGER POSITION TO SERVE BEST INTERESTS OF PEOPLES IN AFRICA." RE ERITREA, EPMG SAID AMIN'S REMARKS SUPPORT SECESSION, DESERVE NO ATTENTION AND "APPEAR TO SUBVERT AFRICAN UNITY."

4. SOMALIS HERE HAVE REMAINED VERY QUIET. WHILE IN PRIVATE THEY REGRET EXECUTIONS, THEY PROFESS "TO UNDERSTAND" "DIRG'S" DESIRE TO CLEAN OUT CORRUPTION OF PAST AND BUILD NEW NATION. THEY REMAIN EXTREMELY "CORRECT," ESPOUSE SOMALI NON-INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND WATCH CLOSELY FOR SIGNS ETHIOPIAN POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION (MOGADISCIO 1753 PERTAINS).

5. HIGH-LEVEL OAU OFFICIALS FREELY ADMIT DISGUST WITH EXECUTIONS. (PRESUMED GRAVES OF VICTIMS CAN BE SEEN FROM WINDOWS OF OAU HEADQUARTERS.) PRESSURE TO REMOVE OAU FROM ADDIS HAS TAKEN QUANTUM JUMP. THOSE WHO BEFORE FOR PERSONAL, FINANCIAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE REASONS DOUBTED SECRETARIAT WOULD BE MOVED NOW REGARD SUCH AN ACTION AS ALL BUT INEVITABLE. EVEN ETHIOPIANS IN SECRETARIAT ADMIT, "WHO CAN BLAME THEM NOW?" COMMENT: EMBASSY STILL NOT TOTALLY CONVINCED SECRETARIAT WILL MOVE. MUCH DEPENDS ON EVENTS HERE IN NEXT FEW MONTHS. LIKELIHOOD FOR SUCH MOVE, HOWEVER, IS NOW MUCH INCREASED. NIGERIAN OAU STAFF MEMBER CONFIDED NOV. 26 THAT SECRETARIAT HAD SOLICITED INVITATION FROM GHANA TO HOLD FEBRUARY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN ACCRA TO SAVE ETHIOPIANS FROM EMBARRASSMENT. "NO NONE," HAD SAID, "WOULD COME TO ADDIS NOW."

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6. COMMENT: MOST AFRICAN DIPLOMATS, SUDANESE VIEWS NOTWITHSTANDING, ARE WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE DISINTEGRATION OF ETHIOPIA. BEFORE NOV. 23, THIS GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE OF OCCURRING. OBSERVERS NOW BEGINNING TO HEDGE BETS. RUMORS OF RESENTMENT AT RECENT EPMG MOVES, ANTI-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZING AMONG GALLA, AFAR, TIGREAN AND ERITREAN ELEMENTS HAVE UNSETTLED DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE. ATTITUDE APPEARS TO BE WAIT AND SEE, BUT PESSIMISTIC.

WITH ONLY FEW EXCEPTIONS, AFRICAN OPINION CONDEMNS EXECUTIONS
AND VIEWS ETHIOPIA'S FUTURE WITH APPREHENSION.
WYMAN

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